by Government for promotion and development of historical and religious culture in the country particularly in the State of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of financial grants allocated for the same by Government during the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No, Sir. However, a Committee has been constituted to formulate a draft Policy on Culture.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Setting up on Public Library at Panchayat level

1514. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up a Public Library at every Panchayat level;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Setting up of Public Libraries is a subject of the State Governments.

Development of Boddh pilgrim centres

†1515. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the name of countries which have offered to extend assistance till 31st December, 2006 for the development of Boddh pilgrim centres;

(b) the areas for which this assistance has been offered;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the details of the assistance proposals which have been accepted by Government; and

(d) the details of the action plan sanctioned for the development of Boddh pilgrim centres in the country?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The loan agreements have been signed with Japan Bank for International Cooperation for loan assistance for the development of Buddhist sites in Mahrashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

(c) and (d) A loan agreement for 7331 million Japanese Yen has been signed with Japan Bank for International Cooperation for the Conservation and Tourism Development of Ajanta Allora. This project will cover sites at Ajanta, Ellora, Pitalkora, Aurangabad, Daulatabad, Patnadevi, Lonar in Maharashtra.

A loan agreement for 9495 million Japanese Yen has also been entered with Japan Bank for International Cooperation for the Development of Buddhist Circuit in Uttar Pradesh. This project will cover sites at Sarnath, Kushinagar, Kapilvastu, Sravasti, Sankisa in Uttar Pradesh.

Declaration of ancient cities as heritage cities

1516. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to declare more ancient cities in the country as heritage cities;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) what steps have been taken by Government till date for protection and conservation of historical monuments particularly in the States of Rajasthan and Orissa; and

(d) whether Government have allocated any fund in the budget (2007-08) for this purpose and if so, the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The Central Government does not declare cities as heritage cities as there is no such provision in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.